

WISCONSIN RAPIDS DAILY TRIBUNE

Obey talks compromise, not endorsements

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One Wisconsin congressman said it will take a lot more than legislators to incite change within the national leadership.

Addressing a crowd of more than 40 people Monday in a town hall meeting at the Wood County Courthouse, Dave Obey, D-Wausau, criticized the White House for cutting funding to key programs such as Medicare, medical research grants and assistance for dislocated workers. He also commented on the House's economic stimulus package and its affect on a possible recession.

"The budget battle with the president this past year makes quite clear that the nation is highly unlikely to get the changes we need," Obey said. "The public is going to have to decide what direction they want.

"Normally, the Federal Reserve will keep lowering interest rates over and over ... but they aren't going to get the same bang for the buck. That's not going to happen (this time)."

In response to audience members who were concerned about why House Democrats have compromised with Republican leadership on various issues ranging from the economy to national security, he discussed its importance.

"With all due respect, I'm not about to shut down the government," Obey said. "If you don't like the results, don't squawk at me; I didn't vote for George Bush. ... We work our buns off every day."

Obey, who had endorsed John Edwards in the former senator's presidential bid until his exit from the race Thursday, said he will wait until after Tuesday's primaries to make any endorsements in the race for the Democratic nomination.